

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
AUSTIN DIVISION

United States of America

vs.

Joe Louis Rodriguez

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NO. 1:19-CR-306-LY

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
OF THE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

TO: THE HONORABLE LEE YEAKEL
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

The Magistrate Judge submits this Report and Recommendation to the District Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(3). The District Court referred this case to the United States Magistrate Judge for the taking of the defendant's felony guilty plea and for his allocution pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 11.

On September 9, 2020, the defendant and counsel appeared before the Magistrate Judge. In the interests of justice, the plea hearing was conducted by video teleconference due to the exigent circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The defendant, his attorney, and the attorney for the Government all consented to proceed by video teleconference, and they were present throughout the hearing. The Magistrate Judge finds that the video teleconference was sufficient to assess the voluntariness of the plea proceeding, the defendant's credibility, and his understanding.

The undersigned addressed the defendant personally in open court, informed him of the admonishments under Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, and determined that he understood those admonishments. Pursuant to a plea agreement, the defendant pled guilty to one count of Conspiracy to Possess with Intent to Distribute Heroin, in violation of 21 U.S.C.

§ 841(a)(1) and (b)(1)(C), and Felon in Possession of a Firearm, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1).

The Magistrate Judge finds the following:

1. The defendant, with the advice of his attorney, consented to enter this guilty plea before the Magistrate Judge, subject to final approval and sentencing by the District Judge;
2. The defendant fully understands the nature of the charge against him and possible penalties;
3. The defendant understands his constitutional and statutory rights, understands that his constitutional and statutory rights can be waived, and understands the meaning and effect of the waiver of his constitutional and statutory rights;
4. The defendant's plea was made freely and voluntarily;
5. The defendant is competent to enter this plea of guilty; and
6. There is a factual basis for this plea.

RECOMMENDATION

The Magistrate Judge **RECOMMENDS** that the District Court accept the defendant's guilty plea and, after reviewing the presentence investigation report, enter a Final Judgment of guilt against him.

WARNING

The parties may file objections to this Report and Recommendation. A party filing objections must specifically identify those findings or recommendations to which objections are being made. The District Court need not consider frivolous, conclusive, or general objections. *See Battle v. United States Parole Comm'n*, 834 F.2d 419, 421 (5th Cir. 1987). A party's failure to file written objections to the proposed findings and recommendations contained within this Report within fourteen (14) days after being served with a copy of the Report shall bar that party from de novo review by the District Court of the proposed findings and recommendations and, except on grounds of plain error, shall bar the party from appellate review of proposed factual findings and legal

conclusions accepted by the District Court to which no objections were filed. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140, 150-53, 106 S. Ct. 466, 472-74 (1985); *Douglass v. United Servs. Auto. Ass'n*, 79 F.3d 1415, 1428-29 (5th Cir. 1996) (en banc).

SIGNED on September 9, 2020.



SUSAN HIGHTOWER
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE